

Warwick Historic District Commission

Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 16, 2015 Warwick City Hall Planning Department

The following Commission members were in attendance:

Ms. Donna Tobin, Chair
Ms. Ginny Leslie, Vice Chair
Ms. Jennifer Siciliano
Ms. Carol Pratt
Mr. Maxwell Pounder
Mr. William McQuade

The following Commission member was absent:

Mr. Barry O'Brien

The following staff members were present:

Trish Reynolds, Warwick Planning Department
Sue Baker, Warwick Planning Department

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson at 6:02 p.m.

Petition #14-292-470

Residential

14 North Fair Street

Pawtuxet Village

The Petitioner, Stephen Clesluk, is seeking approval to remove existing jalousie windows on the enclosed front porch and install double-hung replacement windows, with window dimensions to match existing openings; to replace the window on the front door with an 8 pane storm window; and to replace the door sidelight with a 4 pane sidelight window.

The Petitioner presented the Commission photos of the front of the house as it presently exists. He explained that he purchased the house 20 years ago and the windows were in poor shape then; at this time, many of the jalousies are not operational and they are also not visually attractive anymore.

(Commissioner Leslie arrived at the meeting at 6:06 p.m.)

The Petitioner explained that the windows are double hung and made of wood. He is looking to replace a total of two panels on each side of the porch; three panels along the front; jalousies in a wooden door with glass; and a narrow panel opposite the door.

The Petitioner explained that they originally wanted to use vinyl because it is more affordable, but they were told that a permit would not be issued unless they were wood clad. Commissioner Tobin explained that vinyl clad windows have been approved before, but the window itself must be wood. She also noted that the Commission in the past has had issues with window grid inserts when people have removed them to clean, for example, and couldn't get them back in properly, or people who simply removed them after approval.

A discussion took place relative to the windows; it would be preferable for them to match windows in the rest of the house. The Petitioner said it was his intention to keep the 6/1. Commissioner McQuade indicated that the Commission would want the existing pattern to be matched.

Commissioner Pounder expressed a concern about the lack of detail relative to what the finished project would look like. He is concerned about the thickness of the mullions and noted that the Commission wants to ensure that the property will blend in with the appearance of the rest of the district. He would like more detail on the appearance, size of windows, etc. Commissioner Leslie was concerned about a space differential in the framing when the old windows are removed and the new ones installed.

The Petitioner stated that the windows have not yet been ordered and he is willing to instruct his contractor to follow whatever specifications the Commission stipulates for the project. The Petitioner indicated that he had not been informed how much information he would have to present that evening, and did not want to have to appear multiple times before the Commission. He would prefer that only one more meeting be held to resolve the Commission's concerns and answer questions.

The Petitioner asked for specifications from the Commission so he knows what will be acceptable and will talk to his contractor to ensure that the finished project will be what the Commission wants. A discussion took place relative to the window grids.

The Commission ultimately suggested simulated divided lights, 6/1 windows as described, and that woodwork should be matched to the framing, divisions and casements of windows that presently exist. It was also noted that the Commission was looking for wood to give the same appearance as the rest of the house. Commissioner Pratt said that the construction should consist of the casings being built to match the house and the windows made to fit them, and not the other way around. Commissioner Pounder noted that +/- a quarter inch or so difference would be acceptable.

Ms. Reynolds expressed concern that, even with the jalousies in poor condition, they still conveyed the lightness and open feeling of the original open porch. She is concerned that the new windows might affect that and suggested that the Petitioner ask his contractor to prepare a drawing depicting what the work will look like. The drawing would have to be submitted to the Building Department regardless, and this will afford the Commission the opportunity to see the design and appearance of the porch prior

to voting on the Petition. Commissioner Pounder said he would feel more comfortable with a drawing; something presented graphically. Commissioner Tobin did note that she had had work performed on her porch similar to what the Petitioner is requesting.

Commissioner Tobin asked that the drawing be done very much to scale of how the frame and windows will look, and show the size of the framing of the windows and door in relation to the front of the house. Ms. Reynolds noted that the Planning Office always suggest to Petitioners that the most important thing is to clearly show the Commission the present structure's appearance and what it will look like in the future. There are many ways to do that – small models, or pictures, for example. This was a good attempt with a lot of information, but a drawing is important, especially as there is still some doubt about the final product.

The Petitioner inquired if they can get on the January docket. Ms. Reynolds indicated that would not be a problem, but the Petitioner would need to submit a drawing prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Siciliano motioned to continue the Petition until the January 20, 2016 meeting in order for the Petitioner to speak with his contractor and submit the requested drawing. Seconded by Commissioners Pratt and Leslie. The motion passed 6-0; none were opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Siciliano made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2015 meeting; seconded by Commissioner Pratt. All were in favor; none opposed.

Preserve America Community Designation

Ms. Baker explained that the City is in the process of preparing an application seeking a "Preserve America Community" Designation. This is a federal program that helps to encourage and promote historic assets within a community. Roughly 20 other Rhode Island communities have this designation. A requirement of the application is that the City Council approve a resolution of support for the initiative; a memo has been drafted from the Planning Department Director explaining the program to the Council, its benefits to the community, as well as economic development and tourism initiatives. The designation would also help to further the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. It is hoped the Commission will sign onto the memo as well.

Commissioner Pounder moved that the Warwick Historic District Commission unanimously support the application for becoming a Preserve America Community. Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion, which passed 6-0; none were opposed.

69 Fair Street

A discussion took place relative to ongoing work at 69 Fair Street. Ms. Reynolds had stopped to view the progress and was shocked to see all the landscaping had been removed. That was not part of the original plan, although some damage to the property was sustained during the August microblast.

Ms. Reynolds also said once the siding was removed that there is some evidence of how the window trim once looked that no one previously was aware of and she has spoken with the architect regarding replicating this. The project managers are speaking with the State about what to replace so as not to give a false sense of history. During the project, beneath several layers of ceiling tile, they have uncovered the original ceilings with beautiful painted detailing. They hope to restore one of the ceilings, and, based on funding, encapsulate the others.

If anyone has old photos of the property, it would be helpful in determining how the window trim might be replaced. The Commission examined photos of the project work and a brief discussion took place relative to that.

Commissioner Leslie made a motion to adjourn. Commissioners Pratt and McQuade seconded the motion, which passed unanimously; none were opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.